

ALL MY CHILDREN  
A LACEY PIONEER'S STORY

I am the great, great granddaughter of two Washington State pioneer families, the Stephen Duley Ruddell family, who came to the Puget Sound in 1851 and the Tyrus Himes family who came in 1853. I am also the daughter of our times which means I've enjoyed a few soap operas through the years. When researching my pioneer families I was amazed at the strength and courage they showed, not only on their trips here, but also throughout their lives. While trying to chart the Ruddell family marriages and descendants, I found myself saying, " This is like a soap opera and makes a great story." I'd like to tell you about Stephen Duley Ruddell and all his children.

Stephen Duley was born in Bourbon County Kentucky on 16 June in 1816, the son of Susannah Sarah David and Stephen Abraham Ruddell. The Indians had captured his father as a young boy and he lived and fought with his blood brother, Tecumseh, for 15 years. He then became a minister and missionary to the Indians in Missouri and Illinois. Stephen Duley married Keziah Smith on 17 February 1835 in Quincy, Illinois. There they had two children, Paul and William Hendry. They then moved to Schuyler County Missouri where they had Stephen Lafayette. (As it was with many families of the times they chose to repeat the given name with each generation.) Keziah passed away on 4 March 1844.

It was not easy in those days to raise a family alone and Stephen D. was left with three boys ages eight, five and one. On 26 April 1846 he married Winiford Croghan. I wish I knew more about these two in Missouri for they must have had an interesting courtship and an exciting household. Her maiden name had been Kelly and I suspect she brought some Irish spirit along with her four children to their marriage. She was first married to a Mr. Hicks and had two sons, Urban East born in 1828 and Thomas Benton. She then married a Mr. Croghan and had two girls, Janette and Lydia. To the Ruddell marriage on March 25, 1847 Catherine Ruddell was born and on March 15, 1849 California Ann Ruddell was born.

Although Stephen D. was a well to do farmer in a rich and rapidly improving county, he and Winiford decided to take their large family and move to Oregon in 1851. By that time Urban had married and he and his wife made plans to travel with them. The twelve of them met with the wagon train on April 1 in 1851 in Centerville, Iowa. There were twenty-one wagons and sixty-two people under the guidance of a Capt. Cochrane. It was known that Stephen Lafayette, then age 7, had an infected leg and they had arranged for a doctor to meet them in Omaha, Nebraska. He determined that the leg would need to be amputated and they wagon train waited while the operation was performed. On 15 May the group crossed the Missouri river at Council Bluffs and started their trip west.

The trip was not without the expected incidents of flooding, troublesome Indians, buffalo, sickness and trail hardships. Two babies were born to members of the train on the evening they camped at Chimney rock and all continued on the next day. They were at Independence Rock on August fourth, which made them about a month behind the usual schedule. After they crossed the Blue Mountains the wagon train divided, the major part taking the Barlow Trail to the Willamette Valley and the rest going on to The Dalles. Stephen D. and his large family, along with the Crocketts and the Ebeys, decided to finish their journey by boat to the Puget Sound.

The women and the children were put on a large flatboat with the wagons and their possessions and the older men navigated it down the Columbia. The younger members drove the cattle and horses over a trail across the mountains, going north of Mt. Hood and crossing the Columbia above the upper portage at Wind Mountain. At the Cascades they all met, the boat was unloaded, the wagons hitched and taken over a rough trail. Stephen Ruddell and John Crockett took the flatboat through the rapids. Then once again all was loaded on the flatboat and they continued down the Columbia until they reached the Cowlitz, River on October 6, 1851. They had been six months on the trail but the Crocketts and the Ebeys continued on to the Sound country. The Ruddells decided to remain near Kelso on the Seth Catlin place for the winter.

In the late winter of 1852 the Ruddells proceed on to Chambers' Prairie where Stephen Duley and Winiford took out a Donation Land Claim in Thurston County on 21 February. There they built a log home for their family, which, although changed and added on to, is still being lived in today. During the Indian Wars of 1855 it was enclosed, called the Ruddell Stockade and provided shelter for several families. Rev. Rigdon of Oregon organized the first Christian Church in Puget Sound basin in that blockhouse in November 1857.

Urban East Hicks and his wife did not come with the family to Chambers' Prairie, but stayed in the Cowlitz area where he taught school. He later went to Portland worked on the Oregon Times newspaper. I should add here that Urban had been trained as a printer in Hannibal, Missouri, and had taught Samuel Clemens, later known as Mark Twain, how to set type. In May 1853 he brought his wife, who was sick, and small son, Franklin Pierce Hicks, to Chambers' Prairie and took a claim just south of the Ruddell claim. His wife Eliza Jane, passed away in the fall.

Stephen was a farmer, but was active in the political life of the young community. He, with forty-three other men, signed the memorial to the United States Congress on November 25, 1852, asking that a new territory be cut out of part of the Oregon Territory. On March 2, 1853, it was created and named Washington Territory. Stephen was the first Territorial Assessor, Commissioner in Thurston County for two years, a member of the lower house of the legislature for one term and a private in Company E, Washington Territory Volunteers.

Winiford Kelly Hicks Croghan Ruddell passed away on 6 January 1856 and was buried in the Cemetery that Stephen had set aside on his claim for family, friends and neighbors. Once again Stephen was left with a large family. Paul, his oldest son, had died a year earlier and Urban and Thomas Hicks were not living at home, but he still had William (17), Stephen Lafayette, (13), who had only the one leg, Lydia Croghan, Janette Croghan, Catherine (9), and California Ann (7).

On March 2<sup>nd</sup> of that same year a Mr. William White and his family were returning home from a Church service when they were fired upon by six Indians. He was unarmed and walking so he struck the horse that was pulling the cart with his family and caused it to run back to Fort Eaton, which saved his wife and children. He was killed, later found by volunteers and buried in the Ruddell Cemetery. Mrs. Margaret Stewart White was left with seven children. Her oldest daughter, Ann Elizabeth, was already married to Mr. Daniel R. Bigelow of Olympia.

One year later on February 1857, Stephen Duley Ruddell married Margaret Stewart White. This brought John Lee, Clara, George, Ellen and possibly Anson White to the Ruddell household. Two years after that a son, Rigdon Ruddell was born. As with all families their story doesn't end with the birthing of the babies or the union of families. And so, with Stephen D, Ruddell and all the children he had under his care, the soap opera, like the family tree, continued to grow.

Urban East Hicks second marriage was to India Ann Hartsock, daughter of pioneer, Gallatin Hartsock, but of their three children, Gallatin Gwin was the only one to live beyond childhood. Franklin, Urban's son from his first wife, and Gallatin Gwin were both sent to college. Frank became a dentist in Tacoma. Gwin studied medicine in California but later gave it up to become a printer like his father and took an active interest in Washington politics. Thomas Benton Hicks moved to Canada and I understand the family here has just made contact with his descendants so I soon may be able to add to our story.

William Hendry Ruddell, the oldest living son of Stephen, married Helen Zephrene Himes, daughter of the 1853 Naches Pass pioneers Tyrus and Emeline Himes. The Himes family lived close to the Ruddells and during the Indian Wars they stayed in the Ruddell Stockade for protection. Helen's big brother, George Himes, kept diaries from the time they arrived on Chambers' Prairie, was a printer and later helped found the Oregon Historical Society. His contributions through his writings about and for the history of the area have been most valuable to his family and the Northwest. The Himes family Donation Land Claim was later sold to the Fleetwood family and that land has become the Lacey Community Center and City Park. William and Helen moved to Elma and raised a family of ten children. I am descended from their son Guy Otis and his daughter, my mother, Eunice Sarah Ruddell Berry. I am the first of William's descendants to return and live on Chambers' Prairie, which is now Lacey, and I love my feeling of pride and kinship to the area.

Stephen Lafayette first Married Amanda Packwood, daughter of Nisqually pioneers William and Rhoda Packwood. They had four children. In 1873 Amanda passed away and two years later he married Emeline Fleetwood. They had six children. On June 12, 1883 Stephen's sister-in-law, Lucy Ann Fleetwood, married his half brother, Rigdon Ruddell. In 1884 Keziah Belle, Stephen's oldest daughter, married William Washington Fleetwood, Emeline's, brother. Another sister of Emeline's married David Chambers whose parents had first settled Chamber's Prairie. Her brother, David is the Fleetwood family that bought the Himes property and later donated part of it for the first Lacey School. Some of these families have stayed in the area and continue to contribute to our historical fact finding efforts. Stephen's and Emeline's son, Clarence, was a barber and lived here all his life. His daughter, Emeline Ruddell Kilber, still lives in Lacey and we have become good friends. We both belong to the Daughters of Washington Pioneers and the Lacey Historical Society.

Lydia Croghan married John B. Forbes and Jeanette Croghan married James T. Phillips who had a land claim south of the Ruddells. Catherine Ruddell married Augustus Balch of the Steilacoom pioneer family. Their still living granddaughter can relate some stories told by her grandmother of the wagon trip out with the Ruddells. California Ann married Henry Elder.

Clara White, who came to the Ruddell family with her mother Margaret, married Ralph Oregon Dunbar, Judge of the Washington State Supreme Court. Ellen, her sister, married George Byrd. Rigdon Ruddell married Lucy Ann Fleetwood who was the sister of his half brother's wife. They moved to Oregon and had four children.

Stephen Duley Ruddell made many contributions to our State with his participation in developing of his community. I believe his greatest contribution was the care and nurturing of, "All His Children" and their continuing legacy of service. He planted deep routes for his family and the branches welcomed the other pioneers to their wonderful family tree.

Thank you for letting me tell his story.

Zelma Louise Bernd  
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